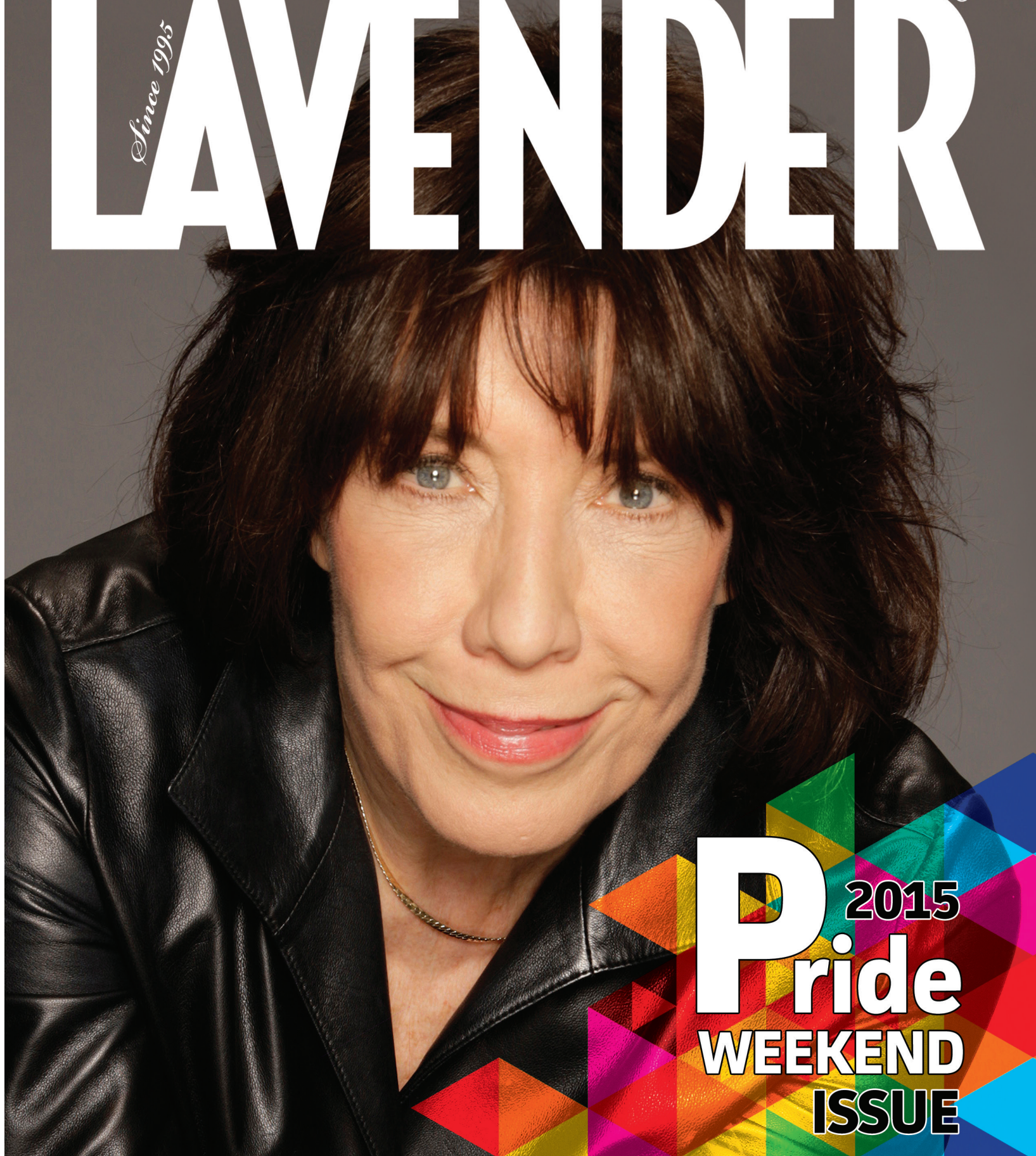




Senior Living Issue: 2015 National Senior Games in Minnesota,
Can I Afford Senior Living?

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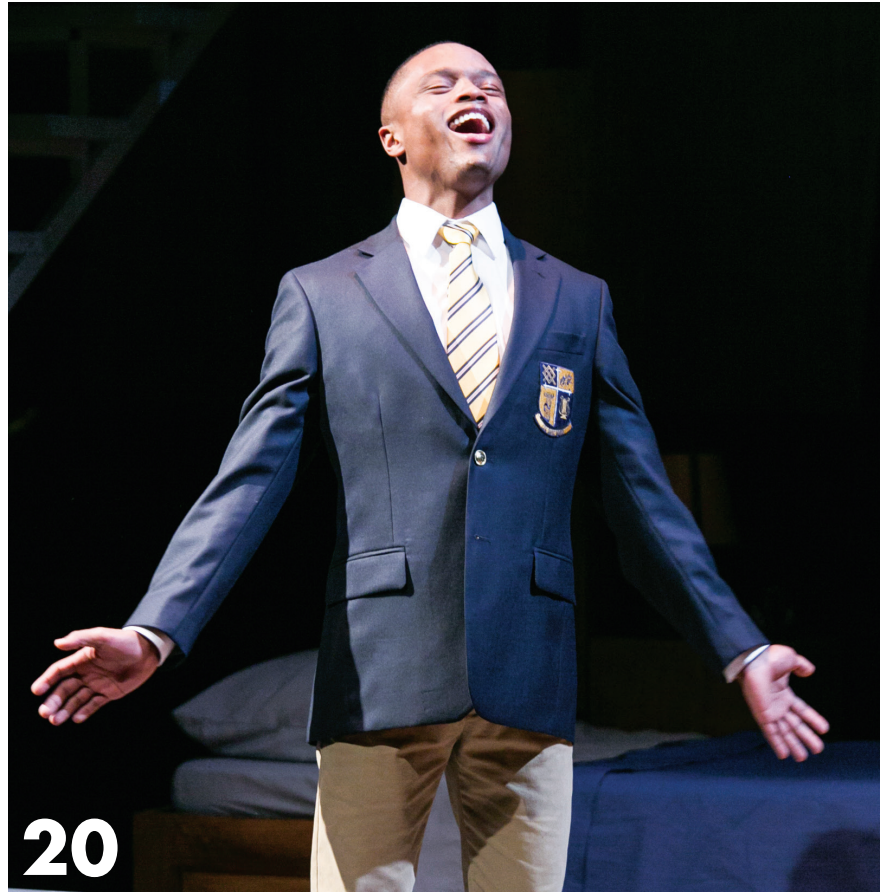
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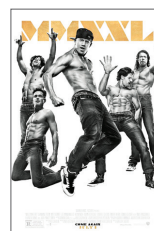


Page 20: Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp. Page 16: Photo by Robert Fleischman. Page 28: Photo by Hubert Bonnet. Page 58: Photo by Randy Stern.

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Online Magazine



Prizes



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ON THE COVER

There is so much to do, we're planning to kick off Pride Weekend with Lily Tomlin at Orchestra Hall!
Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

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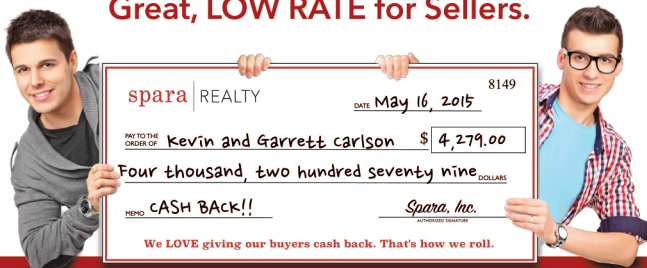
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Denise Nix

Position: Income Tax Specialist

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Interesting Fact: I always wanted to be a gay man because I should've been born a queen.

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Grow Old Along with Me

Happy Pride Weekend! The month-long celebration of Pride in the Twin Cities is hitting its peak this weekend. I can't wait to get out there and see everyone at one of the many events listed in this issue. Though there are many reasons for tension in our lives in recent days and months considering the horror in Charleston, the open discussions regarding Caitlyn Jenner and transgender persons, and the decision from the Supreme Court of the United States regarding marriage in the bounds, we can also come together and celebrate what is good. Together, we can. Together, we must.

I always have a long-lasting afterglow following each of our Pride issues. Because the Pride issue is what our magazine would look like if advertisers chose to be in the magazine all year 'round, we get to include pretty much all of the editorial topics in one publication. Sure, there is special Pride-specific content, but most of it is what we already include... just more of it and all in one place. With more coverage comes more of the diversity that is within the community.

One of the areas of diversity in this community that is less often seen is the senior contingency. As people get older, they are less visible. Whether it's because of retirement, or lack of ease in travel, or simply wanting to stay put, the demographic group of seniors tends to fade away. We're trying to buck that trend in these Senior Living issues and pull people more to the fore.

I sometimes get guff for asking people if they'd like to be a part of one of our senior issues...because, guess what, people don't necessarily like to be considered elderly. Big shock there. Again, mea culpa. Now that the National Senior Games lists "senior" as being 50+, I'm not going to be nearly as sheepish about it. Wear your years proudly. You deserve to. And, when I see articles about who else is joining the 50+ club this year, your company includes the Hollywood Brat Pack members like Sarah Jessica Parker, Charlie Sheen, and Robert Downey Jr. Fifty is not old. Fifty is still mid-stride. Some of the people in that Brat Pack crowd lived a hard life for a while there and I wouldn't have guessed that they would make it to 50; considering that they could have another almost-half life left on this earth, it's mind-boggling.

What's also mind-boggling is how I often hear that a gay man's life is over at 30. That is complete bullshit and we all know it. What we need to embrace are the renaissances of our lives. We will be reborn a number of times. Add a person. Subtract a person. Change careers. Join a club. Start working out. See faraway lands. Get a pet. Sell your car. Start protesting. Run for office. Play sports again.

The 2015 National Senior Games are in town this July. If that isn't one big advertisement for life after 50, I don't know what is. In the piece

about the Games later in the issue, Jan Furuli talks about how she was slowing down and that was unacceptable to her, so she stopped it. She started playing sports again and improved her quality of life in a number of ways. Also proof of life after 50 is Lily Tomlin. Lily's in town. She's on our cover. She'll be on stage at Orchestra Hall. She's proof that it gets better. No, we can't all be Lily Tomlin, but we can look to her as an example of what life can look like as we age past 50. A recent marriage, a hit show, and more on the horizon, Lily is in a renaissance with her humor intact and I am so grateful for it.

When I think of what my future will be like, I hope it's more like Lily's or Jan's lives. I want to get up every morning with a role and a reason, I want to be engaged and working. I don't want to fear how everything in my life might change as I get older. Reading about "How Can I Afford Senior Living?" later in this issue was eye-opening for me. As someone who is single and aging out of the time when I might have my own kids, my future might only involve myself. I'm not unique; there are many of us who might be hoping that our nieces and nephews don't forget us as we move into senior communities in 20–30 years. It is a less-frightening prospect the more we know. But, before then, to walk that path with our parents will be eye-opening as well. Though mine came home one day with an announcement that should've had a big bow on it ("We now have long-term care insurance! You're welcome!"), there will be much to learn in the years ahead. Our parents never stop teaching us; if we're fortunate to still have them in our lives, it's up to us to take notice.

It's also up to us to be there for each other. My age group is moving from the time when we lose our grandparents to the time when we lose our parents. Then, we'll lose each other. The more diverse in age my friends are, the more life and loss there is for me to experience with them. Life and loss...and love. Never forget the love.

With you, with thanks, and with love,

Andy ■



Andy

Tudor Thoughts: Once-Upon-a-Time is Now

I was recently caught up in PBS's 6-part production of *Wolf Hall*. Created from Hilary Mantel's novels, it dramatizes Thomas Cromwell's climb from abused urchin to adviser to Henry VIII, and follows Cromwell as he negotiates the annulment of Henry's first marriage, his subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn, and Anne's undoing. After Boleyn's beheading, the series ends as Henry embraces Cromwell, unaware of the latter's thousand-yard stare over his shoulder.

Henry VIII wanted it all: he brushed aside the Pope to become Supreme Head of the Church of England and launched the Reformation to possess Boleyn. Heresy, treason, and lost usefulness were all capital crimes for Henry, but their definition changed at his whim; three months after receiving an earldom, Cromwell's own neck was on the block.

All this was all a good five centuries ago, and now makes good theater, but I realized that the five-hundred-year gap isn't so vast. Half-vast, at best. We've advanced hugely in hygiene, safe childbirth, disease prevention and treatment, but less so in the areas of religious and non-religious tolerance of others and of general kindness toward each other.

Granted, no one in this country today can be executed for heresy ("wrong" or "no" beliefs), but we have vocal religious factions — some of whom are also at odds — asserting that their dogma alone should be made America's religion, denying that our founders stated clearly that everyone should be free to worship or not as they choose. Arizona has produced both politician Sylvia Allen whose bill requires mandatory church attendance and pastor Steven Anderson who would exterminate all gays.

Tudor England had to bend to every passing whim of Henry's changing mind; one day death for believing in transubstantiation, another day for not; always death for an atheist.

I'm not preaching, but reminding that we as American citizens have something rare and precious in our religious freedom, cautioning that it can, as in other parts of the world, be lost. Belief, however fervent and fanatical, does not (yet) grant a license to torture and kill those not of one's belief, nor does unbelief mean an individual has no moral compass. Awe and wonder come in many forms, in the soaring vault of a nave and the far ranges of the Hubble telescope. ■



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Apu Trilogy. Photo courtesy of Janus Film

APU TRILOGY

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The *Citizen Kane* of Indian cinema, the *Apu Trilogy*, returns in a new restoration that's been cheered about everywhere. Satyajit Ray's milestone may not compute with fans of Bollywood as it is starkly realistic. It's the embodiment of what's called Parallel Cinema, an Indian movement that repudiated the song and dance indoctrination of Bollywood. PC took on serious issues of poverty, human struggle, and politics.

The 1950s award-laden trilogy tells the story of Apu (Apurba Kumar Roy), a Bengal male, from his childhood to early manhood. Iconic directors, American John Huston and Frenchman Jean Renoir, were champions of this work that had more obstacles thrown at it than a ship in a storm. But *Apu* was made and took its place in history.

INTERNATIONAL POP

Through Aug. 29
Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Mpls.
612-375-7600
www.walkerart.org

Every few years the Walker Art Center brings us a jaw-

droppingly amazing exhibit. The current *International Pop* is such a one. Today, whether we are conscious of it or not, the pop culture we see is international, mirroring the global economy that was ushered into this country economically during the Clinton-Gingrich era. However, before that time, pop cultures had been emerging independently in different parts of the world, even behind the anti-capitalist Iron Curtain. This emergence is reflected in an explosively colorful exhibit you must not miss.

Curators Darsie Alexander and Bartholomew Ryan bring us vibrantly powerful images and groupings of images, including film, ranging from the 1950s to the early 1970s, from various parts of the world including the United States, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Eastern Europe,

and Brazil.

The conceptual range is notable, including seemingly mundane representations of objects like Robert Watts's *TV Dinner*; David Hockney's androgynous *The Room, Tarzana*; the sumptuously heretical *The Western, Christian Civilization* by Leon Ferrari, which consists of a crucifix attached to a fighter jet. The Argentinian conceptual artist reminds us of the religious connotations of the Vietnam War as against the "godless communists". And, though there are legitimate arguments over the legitimacy of gay reproducer Andy Warhol being a legitimate artist, his *Sixteen Jackies* of Jacqueline Kennedy right after JFK's assassination are breathtaking.

Patriotism is subtly questioned in gay painter Jasper Johns's *Flags*. Communism is subtly questioned in Thomas Bayrle's electronic piece *Mao*. Renegade female sexuality is audaciously evoked in works by Slovakian mixed media artist, Jana Zelibska. Audacious, because her works at the Walker hail from mid-1960s communist Czechoslovakia, where censorship ruled. Moreover, it's not the male gaze, obviously, but we experience a female gaze on women in intimate, unclothed, and partially clothed positions. She created these alluring works at profound personal risk.

MARY POPPINS

Extended through Aug. 29
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Since its world premiere 11 years ago, the stage version of *Mary Poppins* has gotten rightful credit for attempting to attune to its fiction origins authored by writer P.L. Travers. The 1964 blockbuster film, which is still on the 25 most profitable films ever list when adjusted for inflation, is derided by some for being sappy. That said, the film still retains

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some of Travers' social consciousness that continues to wear well. Therefore, Julian Fellowes who wrote the musical book was the ideal choice to compromise between Disney and Travers (both of whom are long dead). Fellowes is, after all, arguably the greatest living period screen and television writer (*Gosford Park*, *Downton Abbey*). And right or wrong, like it or not, the classic film version nominated for 13 Oscars and winning five is to be reckoned with and is clearly beloved.

What sets the Chanhassen Dinner Theatres' offering up as a truly marvelous production that can hold its own with Robert Stevenson's film is at root two things: Michael Brindisi's direction and Ann Michels' title role performance. Brindisi is renowned for his comedic flair in musicals, but comedy doesn't have the zing that makes a show revelatory unless there is a serious understanding of the script. Brindisi mines this with emotional power while enlivening the zest.

In the film, David Tomlinson and Glynis Johns are gloriously daffy as parents, George and Winifred Banks. But the stage version cuts deeper with the same circumstances. At Chan, Keith Rice and Janet Hayes Trow viscerally reveal the inner terror of two parents with two children dependent on them, threatened with financial ruin. In the musical the stakes feel much more dire. Some will find the musical's attitude about the nuclear family trite, but given the time and limitations of the time and place, I find it legitimate and poignant. Sue Berger's evocative lighting matches Rice and Hayes Trow's deeply felt, starkly realistic moments.

Though I have been an ardent Julie Andrews zealot continuously for the past 50 years since I first saw the film at age five, I still adore Michels' Mary. Fellowes gives us sterner stuff in the woman, there's a bit of a "tough love" edge that registers with contemporary common sense. Michels embodies that with a palpable sense of underlying empathy. The actress herself is a stately vision out of a bit over a century ago. That said, the entire production evokes that — Rich Hamson's costumes in particular.

First-rate music director Andrew Cooke demonstrates how the 21st century tunes by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe can meld with the Sherman Brothers' supercalifragilistic 1960s classics. Tamara Kangas Erickson's choreography captures the Poppins spirit. Michelle Barber as an elderly street woman touchingly renders the tune "Feed the Birds".

THE MATCHMAKER

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www.parksquaretheatre.org

Gay playwright Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker*, originally directed on Broadway by Tyrone Guthrie in 1955, gives us one of the most dynamic female protagonists in all of comedy, Dolly Levi. Most people know her from gay musical wizard Jerry Herman's stage musical adaptation, *Hello Dolly!* So if you are a fan of the musical, then you are bound to find the original source something like meeting an old friend in a new context.

At Park Square, the indomitable Karen Wiese-Thompson plays the coveted role for Girl Friday Productions in the new Andy Boss space. Wiese-Thompson has long been one of the Twin Cities' top comic actresses and audiences love her. But though she's naturally funny, she always gets beneath the surface.

Wiese-Thompson shares, "I think Dolly's a progressive feminist, though it's not really a conscious ideal, it's out of necessity. She does what she needs to do to survive while making sure everyone around is thriving as well. There's not a selfish bone in her. She's full of hope and joy and absolutely believes that her 'arranging' of things will make the world a better place."

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Once is significant in three notable ways. 1) It is one of the most successful adaptations of a film into a stage musical ever. 2) It uniquely retains its intimate nature even in big spaces like the State Theatre. 3) All the actors are part of the band and the vocals.

Ensemble actress at the State, Erica Spyres, adds, "*Once* is a beautiful love story because it's a story about real love and the struggle associated with that. It's not pretty, it's not simple, but it's truthful and that has its own real beauty. And it's not just about a guy-girl love story; it's about everyone sacrificing something for someone else's benefit." ■



The Matchmaker. Photo by Robert Fleischman



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Choir Boy. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

THE GUTHRIE'S "CHOIR BOY" EXAMINES HOMOPHOBIA IN AN AFRICAN AMERICAN PREP SCHOOL

Thirty-four-year-old Tarell Alvin McCraney has been hailed by media powers as the best gay playwright to emerge since Tony Kushner.

The Brother/Sister Plays trilogy set in Louisiana was his first big splash, of which Pillsbury House Theatre and the Mount Curve Company produced

area premieres at the Guthrie's Dowling Studio.

This time around the Guthrie Theater itself is producing a McCraney play: his 2012

sensation, *Choir Boy*. This play with music has scored with critics and audiences in London, New York, and Washington.

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Sat Jul 11 8pm

Sarah Hicks, conductor / Sam Bergman, violist-host

Intrigued by classical music? Join Sam and Sarah as they explore Rachmaninoff's Symphonic Dances in the first half of the program, with a complete performance of the work after intermission. Distanced from his beloved Russia by the Revolution, learn why Rachmaninoff's final work—often called his most romantic—is considered the capstone of his career.



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PHOTOS Hicks: Greg Helgeson

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Choir Boy. Photo by Heidi Bohnenkamp

The setting is an elite African American boys prep school where McCraney sets up an ideal situation to explore homophobia in the black community. The Charles R.

Drew Prep School for Boys instills timeless values and has an esteemed choir celebrated for its beautiful voices. It's the school's pride and joy.

When the headmaster

picks the feminine and flamboyant Pharus Jonathan Young to lead the school's choir of boys who primarily identify as straight, it affronts the masculine young egos of other

choristers. Moreover, since Young will lead the school's landmark 50th anniversary ceremonies, the jealousy becomes palpable. This triggers ugly personal and homophobic reactions, as well as controversy around the spirituals the boys rehearse and sing.

John-Michael Lyles plays the lead role. He describes that "Pharus Jonathan Young has a voracious flair for music and an invincible femininity, which both prove to be a conflict of interest as he struggles to navigate the heteronormative and religiously founded Charles R. Drew Prep School for Boys. Swimming upstream for the tottering promise of friendship and love, he is made to question whether there's anything worth fighting for at all in this inspired coming of age story of a queer boy sangin' in a choir!"

Directing this play with music is one of the best hands at musical theater around: Peter Rothstein. He says, "The play's hero is a young gay teenager who is confronting his own sexuality and confronting a homophobic institution. I came out of the closet more than two decades ago; the world is very different now, but in many ways the personal coming out process is much the same. The play juxtaposes this coming out/coming of age story with African American spirituals. The particular intersection of sexuality, religion, music, and history is a dynamic I've never staged before." ■

CHOIR BOY

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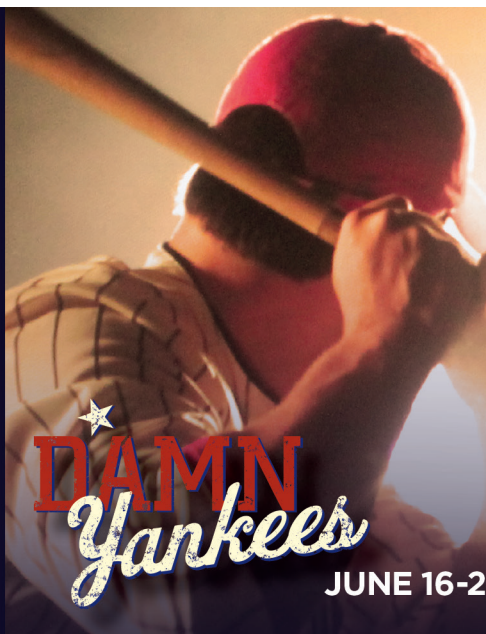
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Kevin "Kaoz" Moore. Photo by David Rubedor

KEVIN "KAOZ" MOORE: LEAVING A LEGACY THROUGH MUSIC

Out gay hip hop artist Kevin "Kaoz" Moore's latest album began as an EP but grew in light of personal and environmental challenges, notably the increased publicity around police brutality and the emergence of the Black Lives

Matter movement. The album, *The End is Beginning*, was released June 9 and is meant to serve as a wake up call to social ills as well as a celebration of victory over a physical illness that threatened to halt the completion of the project

and Kaoz's career.

For Kaoz, getting to this point has been a slow crawl into the Twin Cities hip hop scene. The Cleveland native began his artistic career appearing in countless plays, community theater projects,

independent films, and writing competitions. As grand poetry slam champion of his city, Kaoz represented Cleveland at the National Slam competitions two years in a row. He began his career in Minneapolis as a spoken word artist

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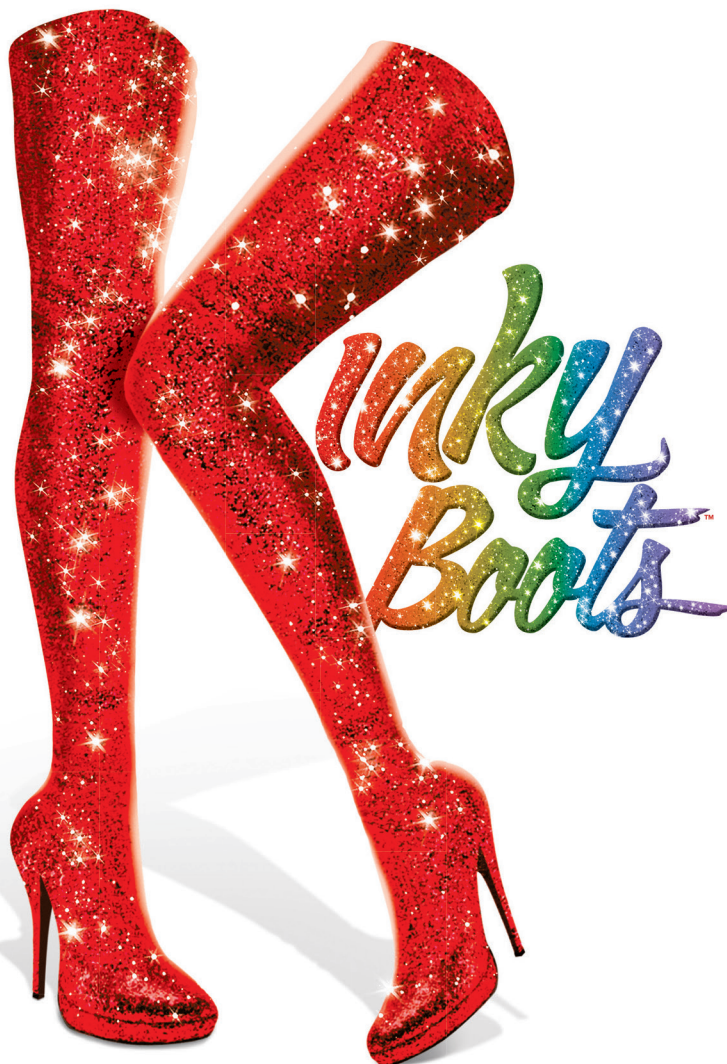
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Kevin "Kaoz" Moore. Photo by David Rubedor

performing at places like the Blue Nile and the P2P stage at Twin Cities Pride. After 2010 and a meeting with local spoken word and hip hop phenom Guante, Kaoz began to perform hip hop as part of the collective for Hip Hop Against Homophobia. This group included Kaoz, Guante, See More Perspective and trans-identified rapper Heidi Barton Stink (who later has been featured on the album *Kaoz Presents: Real Talk MPLS*) and Kaoz has been pretty active in the scene ever since.

Flash forward five years and Kaoz is releasing *The End is Beginning*, a fifteen-song album which was meant to be a six- or seven-song project, but as time went on things changed, especially this past year. "In August I dealt with a bad police harassment situ-

ation which came at the very top of me becoming afflicted with Bell's palsy," Kaoz says.

Bell's palsy, also called idiopathic facial paralysis, is a paralysis or weakness of the muscles on one side of the face. This condition comes on suddenly, often overnight, and usually gets better on its own within a few weeks. In the case of Kaoz, it affected his speech and ability to perform, so after canceling all of his gigs for the remainder of the summer, he dealt with it head on, recovering within two months. However by then, the world became aware of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, and the U.S. Department of Justice declared Kaoz's hometown police force in need of an overhaul.

"I decided that I needed to take this creative opportunity to not only speak from the

standpoint of a gay black man (which I have in all my recent projects)," Kaoz says, "but mainly to speak as a *black* man. I wear this every day as I step into the world, and as much strength as it gives me, it makes me a target. Instead of being self-indulgent, I had to speak for my people."

To anyone that hears Kaoz speak or listens to his music, it's clear that he is outspoken about a variety of causes. Among them, he lists trans rights and visibility, poverty, educational reform, interpersonal relationships, sex, fetishism, oppression, self-love, and he says "I could go on. They all influence my music. The theme of equality goes all through the current project, though."

As passionate as Kaoz is about equality and self-love, it should not be a surprise that he consciously wants to leave a legacy. Specifically, one of encouragement. "I want to inspire people regardless of age to follow their dreams," he says. "I want all the kids, as well, who may hear my voice to find the strength to tackle their musical ambitions regardless of genre or how the 'majority' may view their art. We all have value and can contribute great things to this world. I want to be remembered for being fearless in a genre that media has scapegoated [as a cause of] a lot of problems."

Through his music, Kaoz always explores the intersectionality of race and sexuality, but with his newest album he wanted to explore the former head-first. According to Kaoz, many opportunities come to talk honestly about race, but few people take advantage. He says, "Many people of color feel unheard, and many white people are too pussy to be honest about how race affects our lives and attitudes. Time for everyone to butch it up."

With that same token, he

challenges listeners not to believe everything the media espouses about the hip hop culture, most notably its acceptance of GLBT identities. Hip hop is not inherently homophobic, he says. In fact, according to Kaoz, individual artists might be partly to blame for this reputation.

"Individual artists are responsible for the messages they put out," he says. "Sometimes they do or make music that totally hurts us, and sometimes those people *are* us. It's like they don't wanna give up the privileges that come with being the status quo. What creates the big homophobic illusion is/are corporations and folks behind the scenes who roll out media, who control what we see and hear on the daily basis. [They] twist things up in order to get a certain result or reach a bottom line. It points to a way bigger problem around cis-men and -women in suits and conference rooms, with stakes and money involved in order to perpetuate stereotypes and increase division among social groups."

With that larger issue in mind, Kaoz also acknowledges how much work there is to do within the GLBT community. This year's Pride theme, "Together We Can", is a noble one, according to Kaoz, but he doesn't want to spread the illusion that work is complete. Instead, he puts forth a call to action and a challenge for members of the community: take the opportunity to give up privileges in order to make a bigger change in this world. "Together We Can", but only if we are willing to question if we are helping or hurting the cause with our privileges.

To which he adds, "That my friend is a totally different article. Don't get me started."

The End is Beginning is available on iTunes for \$9.99. For more on Kaoz, be sure to visit him online at www.kaozonline.com.



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Chef Landon Schoenefeld in Nighthawks

Nighthawks

Landon Schoenefeld wasn't even in the market for a new restaurant project. The North Loop pioneering chef and owner of Haute Dish was toiling away on the line recreating decadent comfort foods like the restaurant's eponymous tater tot-adorned hot dish; however, when he was approached by the owner of a building in an up-and-coming neighborhood that had recently housed a wing and catfish joint, the challenge was irresistible.

A matter of months later, the building was gutted down to the studs and soon the address was reborn as Nighthawks. Located kitty-corner from Blackbird on Nicollet Avenue, this is the neighborhood of the moment. Nearby hotspots include the headquarters for The Aliveness Project, the always-buzzy Five Watt Coffee, Kyatchi, and a newly opened butcher shop.

The space is lined with windows, allowing for plenty of daylight to stream in. The room is split into two sections. The front room is lined with a bar, anointed with a thread of LED lights that glow with ever-changing colors. Along the wall are massive black booths, slick seating for groups. The back room has brick walls, a few adorned with Edward Hopper prints and local photography. At the back wall there is an eye-catching open kitchen, where you will find Schoenefeld standing guard,

calling orders and overseeing the new venture. (Eventually, the barstool perch will become Birdie, a pop-up that will sell tickets for a tasting menu. At press time, Birdie had yet to launch.)

Outside, there are plenty of sidewalk seats. When the sun goes down, a streetside view is not unlike the Hopper painting from which the restaurant drew naming inspiration.

Landon Schoenefeld grew up in South Dakota. Although he'd worked in the industry, Schoenefeld didn't consider cooking professionally until he landed in Minneapolis and decided to attend the Arts Institutes International culinary program. It wasn't long after his graduation that the young chef began to get noticed. He worked the line for bold name local chefs and it wasn't long before he was plotting the opening of his own restaurant.

Where Schoenefeld cooks, accolades follow. He has been recognized by *Food & Wine* magazine, racked up the local review stars, and dominated several cooking competitions. His uncanny ability to create a better comfort food is unmatched, which is why running a straightforward diner makes perfect sense. The dishes inside Nighthawks are not re-imagined classics. These are the classics done just as well as they have ever been.



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Let us consider the humble pancake. The simple mix of flour, milk, eggs, and leavening is usually just a maple syrup delivery vehicle. Not here. These fluffy flappers are impossibly light. The crusty exterior gives way to tangy dough pocked with crannies that collect the subtly smoky, sweet syrup. Diners can order them naked or dressed up with a variety of mix-ins, including kimchi and bacon. Yes, you might not have been begging for a kimchi-layered buttermilk pancake, but now you can have one. Go with me on this, the twangy fermented condiment mixed with the buttermilk dough is actually delicious. After initially crinkling my nose at the idea, I inhaled them and was forced to apologize to my empty fork.

The dinner menu is dotted with winners like the massive footlong hot-dogs, the towering pastrami sandwich, as well as another American cheese-topped hamburger ready to enter the race for best in the Twin Cities.

The pastrami is without question the most tender and succulent to be found in the metro area. Piled skyward atop soft, rye bread with a swipe of Kewpie mayonnaise and Uncle Pete's mustard, it is a fat beauty to behold. The Minneapolis portion will keep you filled for hours after meal time and the New York portion is best ordered when swathed in elastic-waist pants.

The hotdogs are sourced locally from Kramarczuk's and come topped with everything from chili to pickled herring. The Nighthawks is buried beneath giardinara, spicy cheese, dill spiked mayo, and shreds of fried potato. The meaty unctuousness of the dog mingled with all the zippy adornments is a joy to devour: salty, spicy, creamy, snappy, and crunchy packed into a delectably squishy bun.

There are all kinds of other dishes to activate a serious attack of the munchies including Frito pie, a proper chopped liver on toast, chili fries,

and fried chicken wings (including some that are nostalgically evocative of the variety the restaurant's prior tenant served).

Now, if you're a vegetarian and balking at all this meat as a condiment business, don't worry. The carrot "hot dog" is a glory in cruelty-free eating. The fried cauliflower tossed in hot sauce will have even the staunchest carnivore swearing off Buffalo hot wings. Schoenefeld has always had the utmost respect for his veggie dishes and those found at Nighthawks are no exception.

The bar serves beer, wine, and a "cocktail" list created with help from Robb Jones (of Spoon and Stable). The craft beers on tap are utilized to make such sippers as The Hopper, a sweet mix of Sweet Child of Vine, grapefruit, petal, and thorn augmented with a few dashes of Angosturra bitters. Annie's Kick is a mix of IPA, Cocchi Americano, and sweetened with a bit of ginger syrup. For those who eschew the booze there are craft sodas like Boylan's Birch Brew (better than root beer), teas, really, really good coffee, and a collection of tasty "frostbites."

It might be difficult to do, but be certain to save room for dessert. The pie slices have been gaining a cult-like following of rabid fans who can't stop Instagramming the food beauties. The entire dessert list is packed with nostalgia, replete with a twisty soft-serve cone, malts, pop-sicles and more.

Nighthawks is open for dinner Monday through Saturday and brunch Saturday and Sunday. ■

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WHAT TO DO

| BY SHANE LUECK |

Let's face it: Pride weekend comes and goes in the blink of an eye, and if you don't plan accordingly, you might just end up missing an event that you *really*

wanted to go to. Use this listing of Pride weekend events to plan your weekend. You might just discover something new to do!

THURSDAY, JUNE 25

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Queertopia is celebrating 10 years of radical and raucous queer love. Bedlam Theatre and Intermedia Arts present the tenth year of the annual Pride cabaret, *Queertopia: A Cabaret Celebration of Queer Love*. Curators Jeffry Lusiak and Nastalie Bogira present a cabaret-style evening of queer performance highlighting some of the most exciting, provocative, and dynamic queer artists working in the Twin Cities today. This

year the Cabaret pays tribute to the performers, performances, and community that has made Queertopia a center for celebration outside mainstream Pride for the past decade.

www.intermediaarts.org/queertopia

LAVENDER'S PRIDE THURSDAY Orchestra Hall

1111 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
June 25

5:30–8:00 p.m.

Free

Twin Cities Pride weekend kicks off with the Twin Cities' biggest happy hour event, followed by a performance by Lily Tomlin. Pre-show happy hour admission is free for Lavender's Pride Thursday attendees, but tickets for Lily Tomlin must be purchased through www.tcpide.org. Enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres, drink specials, and a chance to win great prizes.

www.lavendermagazine.com

TWIN CITIES PRIDE PRESENTS: AN EVENING OF CLASSIC LILY TOMLIN

Orchestra Hall

1111 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis
June 25

8:00 p.m.

\$40–99

Kicking off the official four-day Twin Cities Pride weekend is Lily Tomlin, one of America's foremost comedians. Tomlin continues to venture across an ever-widening range of media, starring in television, theater, motion pictures, animation, and video. Throughout her extraordinary career, Tomlin has received numerous awards, including six Emmys, two Tonys, and a Grammy. Most recently, Tomlin was awarded the prestigious Kennedy Center Honors which each year "celebrates five extraordinary individuals who have spent their lives elevating the cultural vibrancy of our nation and the world." Kennedy Center Chairman David M. Rubenstein said, "Lily Tomlin has made us laugh and continues to amaze us with her acting talent and quick wit."

www.minnesotaorchestra.org



Lily Tomlin

Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

STORIES TOGETHER: PRIDE

St. Louis Park Library

3240 Library Ln., St. Louis Park

June 25

7:00 p.m.

Registration not required

All are welcome

Celebrate family and self-expression during Pride month through books, stories, rhymes, music, and movement. This project is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

www.hclib.org

I WOKE UP LIKE DIS — PRIDE EDITION

Honey and Ginger Hop

205 E Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

June 25

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www.facebook.com/events/698996846893687

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Gay 90s

408 Hennepin Ave. S, Minneapolis

June 25–28

Visit website

18+

Thursday features a foam party, jock strap party, and a meet-and-greet with Alyssa Edwards, Miss City of Lakes. Friday you'll have fun with guest DJ Tracy Young in the Annex Bar and karaoke in the Happy Hour Bar. Don't miss more fun on Saturday: Alyssa Edwards and the La Femme queens, ultimate dance party, and karaoke. Sunday hosts the Pride parade breakfast buffet and the infamous La Femme drag show with BeBe Zahara.

www.gay90s.com

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www.eagleboltbar.com

STORIES TOGETHER: PRIDE East Lake Library

2727 E Lake St., Minneapolis
 June 26
 11:15 a.m.
 Registration not required
 All are welcome
 Celebrate family and self-expression during Pride month through books, stories, rhymes, music, and movement. This project is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.
www.hclib.org

2015 UPTOWN PRIDE BLOCK PARTY

Uptown, Bryant Ave. & Lake St. area
 810 W Lake St., Minneapolis
 June 26
 6:00–10:30 p.m.
 Free
 Our annual Pride Block Party will feature MC Foxy Tann, L'Assassins, North Star Roller Girls, and more! Great brews from Fulton, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Bell's Brewery, and Lagunitas Brewing Co. will be available, plus a mobile vintage photo booth from Blue Goose. A portion of the event

proceedings will benefit OutFront Minnesota.
www.bryantlakebowl.com/theater/2015-uptown-pride-block-party

PRIDE POOL PARTY

The Calhoun Beach Club
 2925 Dean Pkwy., Minneapolis
 June 26
 4:00–8:30 p.m.
 \$12–\$15 in advance, \$20 day-of 21+
 Kick off Pride weekend with an outdoor, sunset pool party at the Calhoun Beach Club. DJ Jeff Kirkwood (Toronto, Provincetown, Sydney) will be spinning Pride anthems. Drink specials and surprises (cash bar only). Each ticket includes a FREE three-day Calhoun Beach Club guest pass; that means you'll have extra days to party by the pool.
www.facebook.com/events/689021247892800

BEER DABBLER

Loring Park
 1382 Willow St., Minneapolis
 June 26
 5:30–9:30 p.m.
 \$40 in advance, \$50 day-of
 For the fourth year in a row, the Beer Dabbler is back at Twin Cities Pride. Kicking off the festival weekend, Dabblers will gather in Loring Park to enjoy pairings between more than 35 different food truck/craft brew combos, a dance party, a killer entertainment lineup, and...humans on wooden poles. That's right! New this year is human foosball and Black Eye Coffee will have cold press on tap free for all attendees, but intended for designated drivers.
www.beerdabbler.com



Photo by RS

Beer Dabbler

8TH ANNUAL FRUIT BOWL

Memory Lanes
 2520 26th Ave. S, Minneapolis
 June 26
 6:00–9:00 p.m.
 \$5 Suggested Donation
 All ages welcome
 This is an all ages, sober, tobacco-free event. Hosted by the fabulous Mrs. Margie Pederson, enjoy an evening of free bowling, kids activities, taco bar, karaoke, prizes, a photobooth, and more. Sand volleyball begins at 6:30, bowling at 6:15. Please RSVP.
www.tcpride.org

COMEDIAN FORTUNE FEIMSTER

Brave New Workshop
 824 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
 June 26
 Doors at 6:30 p.m., Show at 7:30 p.m.
 \$40
 The Brave New Workshop and The Saloon are proud to present red-hot standup comic Fortune Feimster in the BNW's ETC Theatre. After the show, guests receive an all-access wristband for the Saloon's Pride Block Party Friday night, plus an exclusive entrance to the party, happening right next door!
www.theatre.bravenewworkshop.com

"MATT SHEPARD IS A FRIEND OF MINE" PRIDE WEEKEND MOVIE
Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral
 519 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis

June 26
 7:00 p.m.
 Free
 All are welcome
 A feature length documentary about Matthew Shepard that goes beyond the headlines of his tragic murder. The film seeks to tell the story of the Matthew the world hardly knows and to make sense of of this senseless tragedy.
www.ourcathedral.org/pride-movies

GROWN & SEXY PRIDE First Avenue Mainroom

701 First Ave. N, Minneapolis
 June 26
 9:00 p.m.
 \$15
 This year's Grown & Sexy Pride features Latrice Royale from RuPaul's Drag Race season four. Mark your calendars for this all-night dance party infused with incredible onstage performances. The talent is incomparable, the music is amazing, and all are welcome! Special Performances by: Foxy Tann and the Wham Bam Thank You Ma'ams, In New Company, Dykes Do Drag, The Vigilantease Collective, and Dragged Out.
www.first-avenue.com

HEY SAILOR AT JETSET

Jetset Bar
 115 N 1st St., Minneapolis
 June 26



Comedian Fortune Feimster

Photo courtesy of Brave New Workshop

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 ➔

Featured



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In his spare time, Ted particularly enjoys music concerts, Broadway shows and plays around the Twin Cities. Ted will tell you that his hero and favorite musical artist of all time is Cyndi Lauper. His motto is to have fun too! Ted is both a past board member and active in Quorum.

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10:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.

21+

All aboard the S.S. Jetset for Pride 2015. Celebrate Pride in one of the gayest ways possible...sailors! Nautical attire is encouraged, but not required. As always, there is no cover, and the entire weekend is 21+.

[www.facebook.com/
events/867442493337776](https://www.facebook.com/events/867442493337776)

REUNION

Union Rooftop / Rev Ultralounge

731 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 26

10:00 p.m.

\$20/Advance, \$50/VIP

21+

It's Pride! Time to dance! Three unique levels, two superstar DJs, one Pride event like no other! DJ Joe Gauthreaux in Rev Ultra Lounge and DJ Roland Belmares

on the rooftop.

www.simshows.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

GLASS ON GRASS: PRIDE VOLLEYBALL

Loring Park
1382 Willow St., Minneapolis
8:00–9:00 a.m.

\$60 per four-person team

This annual, one-day grass volleyball tournament put on by GLASS (Gay Lesbian Amateur Sport Society) takes place during the Twin Cities GLBT Pride celebration at the Pride festival grounds. The number of games played will depend on the number of teams participating in the event. There will be competitive, intermediate, and recreational divisions offered. www.glassports.org/vb

STORIES TOGETHER: PRIDE Minneapolis Central Library, Children's Library

300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis
June 27

11:00 a.m.

Registration not required

All are welcome

Celebrate family and self-expression during Pride month through books, stories, rhymes, music, and movement. This project is funded with money from Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. www.hclib.org

TWIN CITIES PRIDE FESTIVAL

Loring Park

1382 Willow St.

June 27–28

10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.

Free

The 2015 Twin Cities Pride Fes-

tival features over 400 exhibitors, 40 food and beverage booths, 20 sponsors and 300,000+ visitors participating in this free celebration of the GLBT community. www.tcpride.org

DRAGGED OUT

Stonewall Stage at Loring Park

1382 Willow St., Minneapolis

June 27

3:00 p.m.

Free

Come check out Dragged Out at Twin Cities Pride! Bring all your family and/or friends as it's not too often Dragged Out is at an all ages event! Some of your favorites from the cast will be performing: Ty Torres, Blaze Bordeaux, Andre 1000, Damien D'Luxe, Xavier, and the host Jamie Monroe.

www.facebook.com/Dragged.Out.MN

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38 ➔



Grown & Sexy Pride

Photo by Photo Deviance

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Dragged Out

PRIDE IN CONCERT

Loring Park

1382 Willow St., Minneapolis

June 27

5:00 p.m.

\$10 General Admission, \$75 VIP
Pride in Concert features Mayda, Hunter Valentine, Peaches, and Deborah Cox. Fireworks follow the concert at 10:00 p.m. General admission tickets include admission to the Beer Garden (at any point on Saturday). The Beer Garden will be serving assorted Budweiser and Coke products. VIP admission includes access to a tented lounge area with couches and the DJ booth next to the stage, free bar which includes Budweiser and other assorted beer, Ménage à Trois wine, and vodka (new this year). There will

also be food provided by Macy's Design Cuisine. A VIP ticket means a separate entry (avoid the line!) and other surprises throughout the night.

www.tcpride.org

TRANS DYKE QUEER MARCH 2015

Walker Art Center

1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

June 27

6:00 p.m.

It's that time of year again: time to remind the corporate political system that our voices and lives are the foundation of culture. That they can ignore us and try to destroy us, but we always come back, to challenge and improve society.

[www.facebook.com/
events/548437658631285](http://www.facebook.com/events/548437658631285)

BIG BAD BURLESQUE: A PLUS SIZED CELEBRATION

Ground Zero

15 4th St. NE, Minneapolis

June 27

8:00 p.m.

\$8

Great things do come in big packages for this show! Add some extra sexy and sass to your Pride weekend as we celebrate the big beautiful performers of the Twin Cities burlesque community, including your host for the evening, Smokey Throbinson.

[www.facebook.com/
events/868278339912527](http://www.facebook.com/events/868278339912527)

THE WOMAN'S CLUB OF MINNEAPOLIS 5TH ANNUAL PRIDE DANCE

The Woman's Club of Minneapolis

410 Oak Grove St., Minneapolis

June 27

8:00 p.m.

Members \$10/Advance, \$15/Door, Non-members \$20/Advance, \$25/Door

Put on your party pants, grab a friend, and join us for a Pride dance! Featuring DJ Butch Dandy. Fireworks at dusk. Tickets are non-refundable.

[www.pridedancewomansclubmpls.
eventbrite.com](http://www.pridedancewomansclubmpls.eventbrite.com)

GRRRL SCOUT: SUMMER CAMP 2015

The Cabooze

917 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis, MN

June 27

9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40 ➔

LAVENDER'S
FIRST Thursdays
The Twin Cities GLBT Community Happy Hour

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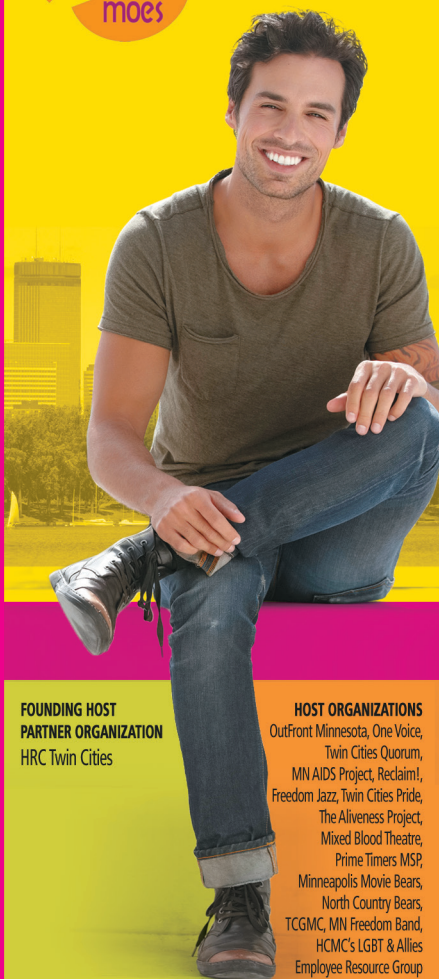
WHEN Thursday, July 2

TIME 5:30 - 8:00 PM

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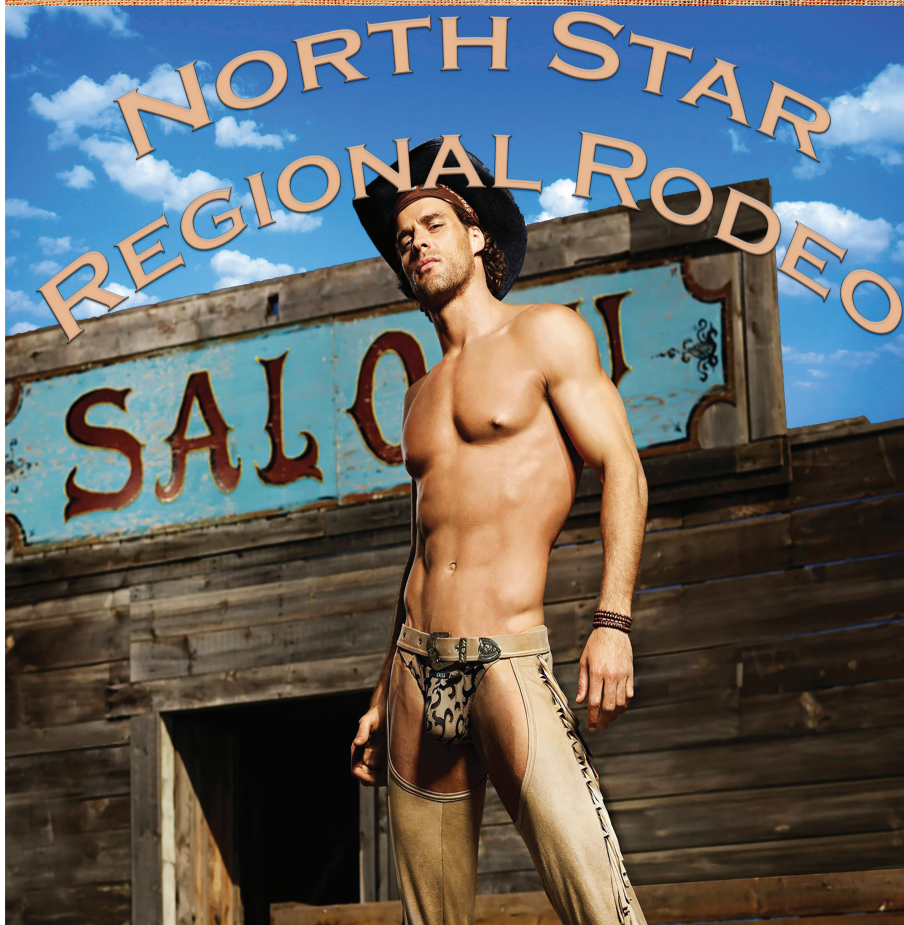
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Photos courtesy Chad Kampe

Pride in the Sky



\$10
21+
Ready to earn those patches? Grrrl Scout is gearing up for its second annual Pride event, Summer Camp. With a strong commitment to breaking conformity, Grrrl Scout curates a unique array of entertainment, partners, and offerings for each and every event. Summer Camp is no different. This year they promise to be

pulling out all the stops.
www.cabooze.com

FLIP PHONE PRESENTS: ROBYN VS. TAYLOR

Rev Ultralounge
731 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis
June 27
9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
\$57
21+
Robyn. Taylor. They'll both be part of your Pride weekend. Join FlipPhone at Rev Ultralounge (underneath Union) for an ultimate dance party. You won't want to miss this. Rev has one of the best sound systems in the city! DJ Fancy Restaurant will be throwing down Robyn, Taylor, and other hot jams. The evening includes surprise performances and fantastic drink specials.
www.facebook.com/FlipPhone

SOUL FRIDAY PRIDE PARTY
Icehouse Minneapolis
2528 Nicollet Ave. S, Minneapolis
June 27
9:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
\$12/Advance, \$15/Door, \$25 VIP seated section in mezzanine
21+

Queer women of color and friends, come out and get your pride and soul on. Hosted by Alicia Steele and featuring Pam the Funktress of the Coup, DJ Lady L, DJ Shannon Blowtorch, Manchita of Grrrl Prty, and more! One of the Twin Cities' hottest parties celebrating QWOC is brought to you by the Soul Friday crew. Soul Friday is proud to be an event that celebrates brown folks living the LGBTQ life... Lesbian/Bi/Trans/Queer sisters of color and friends. Looking forward to seeing all shades of brown on that dance floor.
www.facebook.com/SoulFridayMinneapolis

BOOBY TRAP PRIDE
Skyway Theatre
711 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 27
10:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
\$15/General Admission, \$25/VIP, \$400/Bottle Service Package
21+
Known as the longest standing women's queer pride event, Booby Trap Pride is bringing you an extremely sexy event this year.

Featuring your favorite Booby Trap Girls, special performances and of course resident DJ, D-baz, as well as nationally recognized DJ DMIL. This year the event is at a new venue with multiple bars, VIP, bottle service and a special "Throwback Hip Hop" Lounge as well as the main room that will feature all your dancing favorites.
www.facebook.com/boobytrap.mpls

PRIDE CRAWL

Various bars
June 27
10:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.
\$20
21+
Price includes entry to the top Minneapolis venues and drink specials, Featured parties at Lush, Gay 90s & the Cowles Center, with party bus rides between northeast and downtown. Roundup your group and pick up your Pride all access ticket! Buy your ticket early and save.
www.pridecrawl.com

PRIDE WEEKEND AT THE 19 BAR

19 Bar
19 W 15th St., Minneapolis
June 27–28
Visit website
Party with The 19 Bar Pride weekend! Located only two blocks from Loring Park and never a cover charge makes it a great place to celebrate!
www.facebook.com/The19Bar

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

PRIDE IN THE SKY: PARADE ROOFTOP VIEWING PARTY CRAVE

825 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
June 28
9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
\$10
21+
Join Flip Phone and OutFront Minnesota to watch the parade from the sky. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. with the parade beginning two hours later, but dancing goes on all day. Tickets get you a free cocktail, a \$5 donation to OutFront, and non-stop music.
www.outfront.ticketleap.com/parade



Photo by Noah Wolf



Bar Lurcat

SOLAR SUNDAYS PRIDE EDITION

Union Restaurant

731 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

June 28

Doors open at 9:00 a.m., Party begins at 10:00 a.m.

\$10

Join a rooftop party high above the parade! DJs Lindsay 'Shiek' Earney and Lenka Paris will take this weekly party to new heights for the 2nd Annual Pride Parade Party! Full brunch menu available, Absolut Dancers, Softball Shot Men and drink specials.

www.simshows.com

PRIDE'S BIGGEST SUNDAY BLOCK PARTY The Saloon

830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

June 28

Doors open at 9:00 a.m., Post-Parade Party at 1:00 p.m., Stage Show at 7:00 p.m.

Visit website for details

18+

For the parade, both inside and outside bars will be open, parade viewing party on bleachers, \$4 Bloody Marys and mimosas. The post-parade party includes Power Bottom's Power Tower and carnival food trucks. The stage show is hosted by Scott Nevins with Kat Perkins, Pop Rocks, Alaska Thunderfuck, and Adore Delano, complete with fireworks after show.

www.saloonmn.com

5TH ANNUAL RAINBOW RUN

Boom Island Park

800 Sibley Ave. NE, Minneapolis

June 28

9:30 a.m.

\$30

Show your Pride by taking part in the Twin Cities Pride Rainbow Run! Starting at Boom Island and ending near Loring Park, the route takes runners along Hennepin Avenue as spectators begin to gather for the annual Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade.

www.tcpride.org

CONTINUED ON PAGE 43 ➔

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8TH ANNUAL BITCH 'N' BRUNCH

Seven Restaurant

700 Hennepin Ave. S, Minneapolis

June 28

10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

\$30

Bitch Flowers invites you to enjoy the 2015 Twin Cities Pride parade from the fabulous rooftop of the Seven Skybar. Enjoy the view from the largest rooftop on Hennepin Avenue! The location is a great indoor spot with floor to ceiling windows with air conditioned comfort overlooking Hennepin Avenue and will also have the parade on live television monitors.
www.7mpls.net

2015 ASHLEY RUKES GLBT PRIDE PARADE

Downtown Minneapolis

June 28

11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Free on street, \$40 for Grandstand

The 2015 Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade will be held, as always, along Hennepin Avenue in downtown Minneapolis. The parade route starts at 3rd and Hennepin and ends at Spruce and Hennepin.

www.tcpride.org

PRIDE PARTY

Café & Bar Lurcat

1624 Harmon Place, Minneapolis

June 28

12:00–8:00 p.m.

21+

The parade ends where the party starts: at Café & Bar Lurcat! Party comes without a cover and features a giant dance floor with three local DJs: Lenka Paris, Lindsay Sheik, and Steve Silas. Party goers can enjoy satellite bars both indoors and outdoors, bar-front patio with gorgeous open-air seating, and vodka drink specials and beer tubs. Nibble on Lurcat burgers, Lurcat chicken sandwiches, fries with béarnaise, and of course... signature warm sugar cinnamon donuts!

www.cafelurcat.com

SHOWCASE YOUR P.R.I.D.E.

The Pourhouse

10 S 5th St., Minneapolis

June 28

7:00 p.m.–2:00 a.m.




\$8

All ages until 10:00 p.m., 21+ after 10:00 p.m.




Shift Forward presents its first GLBT showcase, creating space for members of the community to show off their musical prowess. After all, P.R.I.D.E. stands for Performing, Rhyming, Inventing, Dancing, Everything. Proceeds are donated to Avenues for Homeless Youth.

www.shiftforwardagency.com ■

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SOLAR SUNDAYS PRIDE EDITION

SUNDAY JUNE 28
10AM-2PM



photo by sophia hantzes

\$10 ADMISSION (INCLUDES A FREE MIMOSA, CHAMPAGNE OR ABSOLUT COCKTAIL)

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SAME DAY TICKETS DOORS OPEN AT 10AM

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LAVENDER LENS | PHOTOS BY GEORGE HOLDGRAFER

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MINNESOTA LEATHER PRIDE 2015

(AND WHY WE STILL NEED PRIDE CELEBRATIONS)

| BY STEVE LENIUS |

It's Pride season again in the Twin Cities, for both the GLBT and leather/BDSM/fetish communities. A GLBT Pride celebration has been happening in the Twin Cities since 1972; Minnesota's Leather Pride celebration began as a single-afternoon event in the early 1990s and expanded to a multi-week celebration in the late 1990s.

Every year I hear people voice opinions like these: "Enough already! Pride? I am so over it!" "It's just become a big GLBT marketing event with overpriced concessions." "It's always the same thing. If there has to be a Pride parade, do we have to see those giant flags again? Why not have a float that's different every year?"

My response: If you're over Pride, that's fine. Don't show up. But don't be surprised when other people show up for the parade, the festival in Loring Park, and all the other Twin Cities Pride and Minnesota Leather Pride events.

Pride keeps happening every year because it needs to keep happening. The community needs Pride to keep happening, as shown by the fact that the community continues to support Pride events by showing up.

Since Pride last year, both the GLBT and leather/BDSM/fetish communities have acquired untold numbers of new members. Some of these new members are young people who are new to one or both of these communities. Some are older people who may have wondered and questioned for years before finally deciding to declare themselves members of one or both of these communities. And then there are all the new community allies — families and friends of all these new members of the GLBT or leather/BDSM/fetish communities.

All these new members and allies of these communities deserve to have a Pride celebration that is just as inspiring and uplifting as the celebrations of years ago, the celebrations that were experienced by the now-jaded naysayers before they became jaded.

That's why the Twin Cities Pride and Minnesota Leather Pride celebrations keep happening every year. And that's why I never get tired of writing Pride columns.

For 2015, the board of Minnesota Leather Pride has made a few changes to their schedule of events. An effort has been made to hold Minnesota Leather Pride events throughout the year, rather than only in June coinciding with the Twin Cities Pride Festival. Some of Minnesota Leather Pride's recent events have included Leather Families Feuding last November; the Mr/Miss Catastrophe Contest fundraiser in Janu-



The front and back of the 2015 Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag. Photo by Andrew Bertke

ary; and the first annual Minnesota Leather Pride Weekend in April, which featured the inaugural contests for three leather titles: Minnesota Leather Sir, Minnesota Leatherboy, and Ms. Minnesota Leather Pride.

The theme of the 2015 Minnesota Leather Pride celebration, and the 2015 commemorative and collectible Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag, is "American Leather Story." This theme was selected by community survey from four theme proposals.

This year's Minnesota Leather Pride dog tag was designed by Andrew Bertke of Everett Allen Photography.

The 2015 dog tag combines bright silver metal with cloisonné (enamel) coloring. The bold colors and near-jewelry quality of the dog tag make a clear statement of leather pride. Get your dog tag, while supplies last, at the Minnesota Leather Pride booth at the Twin Cities Pride Festival in Loring Park (Saturday and Sunday, June 27 and 28).

As part of this year's theme, Minnesota Leather Pride invites you to share your American Leather Story. Maybe your story is about how you discovered your favorite kink. Maybe it's about a great scene you were part of. Maybe it's about your first piece of leather or gear, or your first toy.

The goal of the American Leather Story project is to collect stories, post some of them on the Minnesota Leather Pride website (www.mn-leatherpride.org), and share them with the Leather Archives & Museum in Chicago. Check out the three stories that have already been posted, and then make plans to share your story by text, photos, audio, or video. For more information, contact Minnesota Leather Pride at yourstory@mnleatherpride.org.

This year's remaining Minnesota Leather Pride events are as follows (see www.mnleatherpride.org for the most up-to-date event information):

Thursday, May 25: Atons Annual Leather Pride Smoker. EagleBolt Bar, 8–10 p.m.

Friday, May 26: Floggapalooza. See website listed above for location and time.

Saturday, May 27/Sunday, May 28: Stop by the Minnesota Leather Pride booth at the Twin Cities Pride Festival. This year's special attraction is a display showing the history of Minnesota Leather Pride. Loring Park, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Sunday, May 28: March in the Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade and help carry Minnesota's giant Leather Pride flag. Meet at the corner of 3rd St. S. and Hennepin Ave. by 10:40 a.m. for a group photo; parade begins at 11 a.m. ■

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Jan Furuli, 65, out and proud player for the Lady Loons.

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come head-to-head at the 2015 National Senior Games, the largest multi-sport competition in the world for seniors. This year's games, presented by Humana, will take place in the

Twin Cities July 3–16.

The National Senior Games began in 1987 and is governed by the National Senior Games Association (NSGA), a non-profit member of the United

States Olympic Committee.

The organization "promotes health and wellness for adults 50 and over through education, fitness, and sport." Held every other year, the National Senior

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THE LADY LOONS PRACTICE ONCE PER WEEK AND COMPETE IN LOCAL BAR LEAGUES IN THE CITIES, OFTEN PLAYING AGAINST TEAMS COMPRISED OF YOUNGER ATHLETES.

Games provides an opportunity for senior athletes to come together and enjoy competitive play with other active seniors.

Events such as the National Senior Games provide seniors with opportunities to remain active, which have a vital effect on physical health. According to the National Senior Games Association, the baby boomer generation is growing, both in numbers and in physical size. They state, "Much of the Baby Boomer generation currently suffers from obesity-related chronic conditions...a third of Boomers in the U.S. are obese." Along with the growing problem of obesity, the NSGA discovered through surveys that most Boomers don't get the recommended level of aerobic activity even though they exercise on a daily basis.

But seniors can become more physically active and strive to reach their personal best through participating in athletic activities, which also provide a healthy social outlet as well. The NSGA believes that "the Senior Games Movement offers proof that everyone can improve the quality of their lives at any age by staying active." Participants and fans of the National Senior Games inspire each other to continue to live in good health and fitness, despite society's assumptions of the physical capabilities of seniors.

More than 800 events are planned for the games, including 19 medal sports and two demonstration sports from archery and table tennis to basketball and triathlon. Participants were required to qualify through one of 51 NSGA sanctioned Member State Games in 2014. Individuals and teams compete within five-year age brackets, from ages 50 through 100+. Though most competitors fall between 55 and 80 years



Jan, right, with her partner, in a "Loonatic" shirt. Photo courtesy of Jan Furuli

old, there are approximately 100 athletes going strong in the 90–100+ age range, proving that fitness truly can be a lifelong journey.

One athlete representing Minnesota and our GLBT community is Jan Furuli (65), a member of the Minnesota Lady Loons softball team. As a lifelong athlete, Furuli picked up a mitt again ten years ago at the suggestion of her partner, a die-hard sports fan, and joined the Metro Senior Softball League. Predominantly a male team, the Metro Senior Softball League gave Furuli an entry point back into the game, but she wanted to find a team that would satisfy her competitive nature.

Then Furuli found the Lady Loons, a 65-and-older women's softball team. She joined the team one-and-a-half years ago and is able to get even more involved on the field. She notes that while she can't really compete with the men in the Metro league, she can hold her own with all the talented ladies on the Lady Loons: "These are gals that I can actually compete with and play with. It's a difference between night and day!"

As a member of both teams,

Furuli plays ball several times a week and has experienced numerous benefits of remaining active. "I think my morale is totally boosted; it honestly gives me something to look forward to," she believes. Being on teams has impacted Furuli's life greatly, especially since she has joined the Loons. She adds, "I make time for it; that's my priority now. It's a team, and you don't want to let down your team. You want to be part of that success!"

Additionally, as a cardiac nurse, Furuli is also aware of the health benefits of being an active senior. Though she has always been active — enjoying hikes, bike rides, and birding with her partner — she felt herself getting more sedentary five years ago. "I could feel myself getting in a rut, but I knew that I couldn't let this happen. I needed to keep going and keep moving." As she became more active, she was able to lose weight and gain some muscle.

The Lady Loons practice once per week and compete in local bar leagues in the cities, often playing against teams comprised of younger athletes. But the ladies hold their own on the field and have only lost one bar game this season. Furuli adds, "You can put our team up against any 'kid' team, and we can probably beat them. If we can't beat them, we will join them!" Competing with teams of all ages encourages the Lady Loons to perfect their game and their team ethic.

All their hard work has definitely paid off: the Lady Loons have won several huge competitions, including receiving the gold medal in the 2015 Minnesota Senior Games and the gold in the 2014 World Huntsmen Classic Games in Utah. They also won the silver medal in two previous National Senior

Games, and Furuli believes that this year is their year to win the gold. With the support of their fans, the self-proclaimed "Loonatics", the Lady Loons hope to play their best and bring home a victory.

In addition to being a force to be reckoned with on the field, the Lady Loons have a strong sense of camaraderie — on and off the field. Furuli notes, "We have a total team ethic. This is a really competitive team, and we play well together. We're like a well-oiled machine." The women also host social events and engage in community service projects as a team, including volunteering at local food banks and making quilts for people in need.

Furuli is looking forward to her first National Senior Games with the team. She enjoys how the team plays well together and strives to be the best they can be. "There's no real pressure, but you are expected to perform. If you make a mistake, you learn from it and go on."

As the Lady Loons face several women's teams from all over the country, Furuli will be keeping an eye out for amazing teams she might be able to join in the future once she retires. Furuli's decision for where to retire will be greatly influenced by the presence of an excellent softball team: "If there's a women's team, I'm going to be there. I will not be stopping until I can't play anymore!"

The Lady Loons and thousands of other athletes will come together for the 2015 National Senior Games presented by Humana in Bloomington and St. Paul, Minnesota. The competition will take place July 3–16 and is free to the public. For more information on how to support these inspiring athletes, visit www.NSGA.com. ■



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Senior Living



HOW DO I AFFORD SENIOR LIVING?

While most people presume that senior living care must be paid out of their own pockets, it is good news to many that other methods exist. Everyone has unique circumstances that help determine how they can best fund the senior living options selected. Aside from the sale of a home or traditional savings, you may qualify for some of the additional ways that provide flexibility and access to resources for assisted living financing. Here are some that exist.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING SUPPORT

Social Security Benefits

With average Social Security benefits of \$1,261 per month, and maximum benefits of above \$2,500 per month, this income amount helps many seniors cover a portion of the costs for their care needs.

Veterans Aid and Attendance Pension Benefit

Veterans who served during wartime and their spouses may be eligible to receive nearly

\$2,000 per month to help defray the cost of assisted living, in-home health care or other nonreimbursed medical care through the Aid and Attendance Program. (See Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) information regarding same-sex marriage benefits at www.va.gov/opa/marriage.)

Traditional Medicare

Medicare is a federally funded program designed to cover a variety of health care costs for those who are aged 65 and

over. There are no income or asset means tests to establish eligibility, so this benefit is utilized by most older Americans. There are four distinct parts of Medicare:

Medicare Part A covers medically necessary services like hospital stays, lab tests, surgeries, and supplies like wheelchairs and walkers. Medicare Part A may also cover skilled nursing care up to 120 days after a 3-midnight hospital stay, hospice, and

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some home health services.

Medicare Part B helps cover doctors' and other health care providers' services, outpatient care such as therapy services, durable medical equipment, and home health care. It also covers some preventive services to help maintain health and to keep certain illnesses from getting worse.

Medicare Part C offers health plan options run by Medicare-approved private insurance companies. Medicare Advantage Plans provide an alternate option for receiving benefits and services covered under Part A and Part B. Most Medicare Advantage Plans cover Medicare prescription drug coverage (Part D). Some Medicare Advantage Plans offer extra benefits to attract younger and healthier customers, but often restrict care to manage the overall cost of care expenses.

Medicare Part D helps cover the cost of prescription drugs and is offered through Medicare-approved private insurance companies. Rehabilitation and nursing care in Medicare-licensed nursing homes may be covered following a day stay in a hospital. Medicare Part A may cover 100 percent of care costs during days 1–20 and may cover 80 percent of costs for days 21–100. A Medicare Supplemental Insurance policy often covers the remaining 20 percent of costs during days 21–100. Benefits for those who have selected a Medicare Advantage program will vary according to the plan and insurance provider chosen. Medicare does not generally cover any of the costs traditionally offered by independent living, assisted living, and memory care communities, other than costs of ancillary therapy, home health, or hospice services that may be needed while staying at the community.

Medicaid

About 20 percent of the U.S. population qualifies for their state's Medicaid benefits, with financial eligibility limits based on strict asset (\$2,000 limit in most

states, excluding the value of an owned home) and income limits. Medicaid is funded with a combination of both state and federal resources. Sixty percent of those in nursing homes across the U.S. are eligible for Medicaid benefits. More than half of all states have enacted various types of Medicaid-waiver programs to provide funding options in the lower cost settings of licensed assisted living and memory care communities.

CONVERSION OF ASSETS TO INCOME

Life Insurance Settlements

A life insurance settlement is the sale of an in-force life insurance policy by the policy owner to a third party. Instead of continuing to pay the premiums, the party that purchases the policy will be responsible for paying the premiums, and will collect the proceeds of the policy when you die. Unfortunately, individuals often let a policy lapse and just stop paying premiums when money is tight, not realizing that they could have sold the policy for an actuarially-based offer. The cash settlement received can be used for any purpose, including the current funding of your care needs. The Life Care Funding Group has helped many families easily and quickly convert a life insurance policy into needed cash in as little as 30 days.

Reverse Mortgage

Reverse Mortgages represent a type of loan for homeowners over the age of 62 that converts the equity saved up in a home into an income stream. Be aware that these loans have historically required relatively high transaction and administration costs.

Bridge Loans

When care needs develop today but the time is not right to sell a home to help fund the needed care, you should consider a bridge loan or "senior living line of credit" from firms such as Elder Life Financial. The Elder Life Financial Concierge can help you learn more about financial options, such as an unsecured line of credit or secured lending options, such as a home loan. They can also help you by:

- Accessing real estate specialists that will assist with selling your home

- Working with Veterans Administration to apply for assisted living benefits, including Aid & Attendance
- Converting your life insurance policy into a long-term care benefit
- Helping you consider a senior living line of credit. This product offers a way for retirees to secure credit to help pay for senior living. This financial option is especially valuable if you need time to sell a home or other assets in order to pay for care or fund an entrance fee community initial payment. It can also be helpful if you are waiting for federal benefits to start, such as Veteran's Assistance. These lines of credit are accepted at thousands of communities. They allow seniors to borrow only what is needed on a monthly basis to help finance their senior housing and care needs and like any loan, the line of credit is subject to credit approval.

Private Long-term Care Insurance

Find the policy and ask your insurance agent to help you clarify what benefits are available to help you afford the senior living solution you need. Approximately 10 percent of American seniors have an in-force long term care insurance policy. These policies often cover in-home care, adult day care, assisted living, and skilled nursing care.

FINANCIAL HELP FROM THE KIDS

The advances of medical technology have extended the length of life for older adults beyond the period of time that they planned for, and the reality for 52 percent of older Americans is that they no longer have the income to meet their basic needs. Often their adult children have stepped in to help pay for their needed care and support. These payments have become more creative as more family members have needed to fill the gap between their parent's income, savings, and expenses, using vehicles such as the following:

- Giving an annual gift to parents of up to \$14,000 in

2013. This can give the parent a measured sense of independence. Be aware that such gifts may impact eligibility for Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income.

- Direct payment of bills to a qualified medical provider won't count toward the IRS gift limitation — this includes payments for hospital or physician care, assisted living care, and nursing care.
- Paying bills directly also keeps money out of their estate to avoid possible tax consequences upon their death.
- If an adult child covers more than half of their parent's financial support, the parent might qualify as a dependent for the child's tax return.
- For parents who struggle emotionally with accepting direct financial support, the answer might be an Inter-family Loan that charges very low IRS prescribed applicable federal interest rates. Such loans also avoid boosting the parent's estate or tax burden.
- Becoming more commonplace over the last five years are "upward trusts" with the parents as the named beneficiaries. The parents live off of the income generated by the assets without needing to or being concerned about tapping the core assets. Trust attorneys and accountants should be consulted to create this type of trust.

SUMMARY

We hope the information you've received helped you better understand not only the myriad of senior living and service options available, but also how much each costs and ways you can explore to fund your ideal senior living solution. Brookdale associates are ready to listen, seek to understand, and then partner with you to customize a plan that enriches life today and while providing solutions for all the places life can go. Please go to www.brookdale.com to find a near-by Brookdale community if you have questions or need help navigating your journey. ■

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What Is Spirituality?

I have a confession to make. When I was asked to write a regular column about GLBT spirituality, I had to think for a long time about what spirituality *is*!

You would think someone with a Master of Divinity degree would know that! The religious tradition of my upbringing didn't talk about spirituality. We talked about the *spirit*, by which we meant the *soul*. We talked about spiritual *life* as something that came about through the rituals and teachings of our religious institution. But we didn't talk about *spirituality*. In fact, we honestly tended to scoff at the notion of *spirituality*. People were claiming to be spiritual *without* needing our religious teachings and rituals. To us, it was unthinkable that there could be a spirituality without religion.

But spirituality and religion most certainly are separable. We call it hypocrisy when someone practices religion outwardly, but their spirit isn't in it. So I think it's very important to know that leaving religion, per se, doesn't equal leaving spirituality.

So I needed to get at the heart of that question, "What *is* spirituality?" Sometimes it helps me to talk about what something *isn't*. Spirituality is the part of us that isn't physical. Its hunger isn't fed by food. Its thirst isn't quenched by water. Its coldness isn't warmed by fire. Its pain isn't medicated by a drug or a drink or by any other substance. It's intimately connected to the five senses, affected deeply by the five senses, but it *isn't* the five senses.

I've been paying close attention to when people talk about spirituality. Almost invariably they point to their hearts. Our "spiritual side" is the side of us that needs to love and be loved, to need and be needed, to fulfill and be fulfilled, to have joy and give joy, to be creative and to be inspired.

Where and how one finds all of that is different for every person. Some find that in a religious institution. Others do not. One of the tragedies for many of us in the GLBT community is that, because of what we were taught about ourselves in a religious tradition, we felt excluded from the sense of belonging, comfort, and peace that religion brings others. When I was a child, I learned the song, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." When my religious tradition later taught me that the same Bible says people like me are gross, evil, disgusting, sinful, and going to hell, I stopped believing Jesus loved me. How could I? I remember that, when I finally came out, I could finally ask pastors the question, "How could God have done this to me?" That specific religion robbed me of the spiritual comfort, joy, hope, and peace it sought to bring others. I leave to others the fight over what the Bible means or doesn't mean. I've stopped fighting. I've adopted a non-violent attitude toward my spirit.

To heal from that really deep wound, I needed to leave religion in some ways. But I still needed to fill that spiritual void. I found

my spirituality in music, reading, journaling, running outside in the sunshine, meditation, playing with my son, coffee with friends, and volunteering. Some of us fill that void in joining religious institutions that are accepting of us. Some of us fill it in the rituals and writings of religious institutions that *aren't* accepting of us, but we separate what is harmful from what is beneficial. Others of us actively fight for GLBT rights. Still others find it in creative outlets, or in volunteering.

Here's the best advice I can give from my own spiritual journey. Ask yourself, "What gives me a sense of joy, a sense of peace, a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging?" Those things are your spirituality. Maybe even that word, "spirituality", is a loaded term for you. It is for me sometimes. So then I call it living creatively, living naturally, or living holistically. Honestly, I most often call it "being the real me." It's that simple. It's a return to who I was — before the religious teachings of my former faith tradition devastated me by teaching me there was something intrinsically wrong with me as a gay person.

Just because many of us are not in a religious building on a religious day, that does not mean we are uninterested in spirituality. Let's look for, embrace, and pursue those things that feed our spirits, that bring us a sense of belonging, fulfillment, joy, peace, and wholeness. Those are what make up our spirituality. ■

OUR LAVENDER

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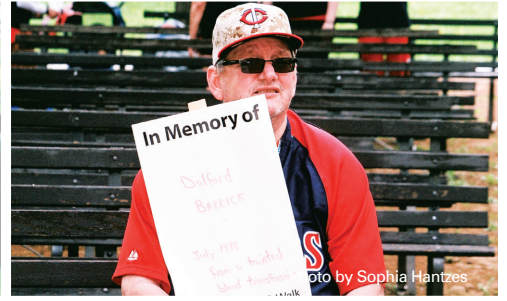


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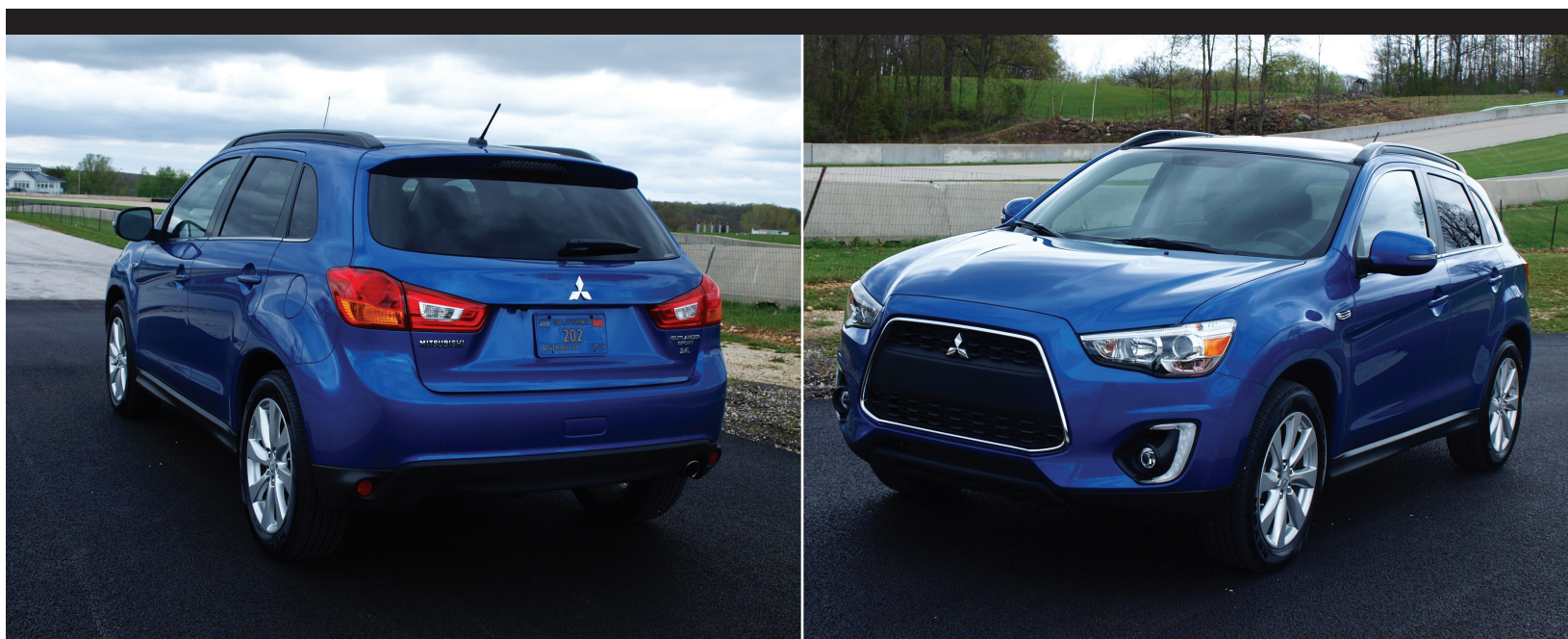
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2015 Mitsubishi Outlander Sport



Which automobile is one of the most popular ones in our community today?

Subaru is a correct answer. It is nationally, as well as locally; however, there is a different truth to tell, especially in the Twin Cities. And, this may or may not surprise you: one of the most popular vehicles in our local GLBT community is a Mitsubishi.

This is a surprise to those who have been watching Mitsubishi's recent history. After the debacle of "zero" financing for a year campaign over a decade ago, Mitsubishi has found its stride nationally. Sales are up in the double digits, led by the Outlander Sport subcompact crossover and the Mirage subcompact hatchback. Locally, the Outlander Sport has been leading the charge for its value and all-wheel drive option to get through the winter here in the Twin Cities.

Our community has embraced the Outlander Sport, as well. There are many reasons why. It is versatile, capable and small enough to handle urban traffic. You can park this anywhere. Plus, its height advantage helps in seeing above the crowd when called for.

Back in January of 2013, *Lavender* reviewed the Outlander Sport just after a refresh and an

initial production run at the Normal, Illinois plant. A 2015 model arrived with several updates and upgrades. The most significant news on the Outlander Sport is that a whole new vehicle segment has been created around it. This year alone, five new competitors will join Mitsubishi in the subcompact crossover/SUV segment. Now that it has company, will it still be one of our favorite new vehicles?

New for 2015 is a pair of LED running lamps framing the fog light area on the lower bumper. It is that crowning touch that makes the Outlander Sport stand out above the rest. It still offers the Lancer-influenced blunt front end leading a stubby crossover silhouette that speaks to practical minds toward its intended use. The doors are big — a huge selling point in this segment — and the liftgate opens up to clear a tall person's head for loading the cargo hold.

Most vehicles are sold on looks. The Outlander Sport is no exception. Though it is sort of a "cute ute", it is really all business. Importantly, the ground clearance is right for our climate: 8.5 inches between the frame and the road...or lack thereof. Not to mention, you can spot these easily to see where you are parked; that is also a huge selling point.

The changes inside are many compared to the last time we had the Outlander Sport. A new steering wheel is one, following current Mitsubishi design elements. Glossy piano black trim on the center stack denotes the new GT trim, which raises the luxury and sport quotient a notch from before. This is the first time we encountered an Outlander Sport with leather — a sporty feel with perforated cushion and backrest areas. It is a thick hide of leather that feels great and looks good with contrasting stitching.

Even better is the latest touchscreen infotainment interface seen on most current Mitsubishi models. It is a cleaner screen than before with better audio and navigation controls for easier setup and quicker response.

The rest of the Outlander Sport's interior remains the same, familiar and quite good. The seating position is now power-adjustable in the GT, which opens up plenty of possibilities to get comfortable. The seats themselves are big and comfortable. A bit more bolstering in the seat-back might help to keep us locked in a bit more. Room for five is possible. Rear seat comfort is very good overall. This tester came with a panoramic roof with LED lighting accents. Though

one would want a sliding part to open up, there is an uninterrupted pane of glass to see what's above for the passengers' enjoyment.

Cargo space is generous, starting at 21.7 cubic feet with all seats up, expanding to 49.5 cubic feet all the way to the front seats. In all, it is a tall and wide space to load up for the journey. One thing to keep in mind when loading up the rear: watch out for the Rockford Fosgate subwoofer, if equipped.

The infotainment system came with Bluetooth connectivity for audio files and, if enabled from your smartphone, Pandora playback. Nine Rockford Fosgate speakers take care of the rest emitting 710 watts of clean sound around the cabin.

One complaint pundits and Outlander Sport owners had was the lack of power underfoot. Mitsubishi asked whether more power could be achieved with a larger engine or a turbocharged version of the same standard 2.0-liter MIVEC four-cylinder mill. For this market, Mitsubishi chose the former, the 2.4-liter version of the MIVEC engine. Power goes up to 168 horsepower, while torque is raised to 167 pound-feet. Mitsubishi connected this engine to the Continuously Variable Transmission and

offers this in both front-wheel drive and All-Wheel Control. Our tester came with AWC, the best configuration for us.

The result was better performance overall. I picked up this Outlander Sport GT 2.4 at Road America in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin where it was a part of a media event for regional automotive pundits. Over the course of 328 miles, I felt the extra power when it called for it. The Outlander Sport did extremely well on lonely highways, traffic jams, and just passing up long-haul trucks along the way. Passing power was definitely improved with the larger engine under the hood. The response from the CVT was better. This was a good move overall to go with the larger engine as an option to the standard 148-horsepower 2.0-liter motor.

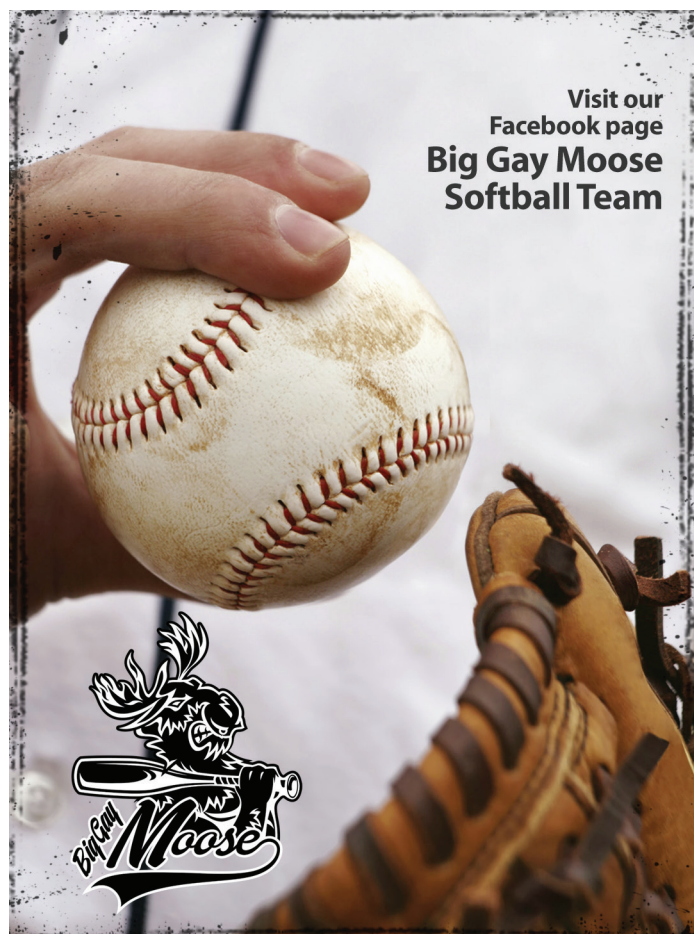
When driving the Outlander Sport, you will appreciate how well it drives, even with the smaller 2.0-liter engine. There had been improvements on ride quality thanks to an approach toward a balanced ride that absorbs bumps and potholes extremely well, even with an 8.7-inch ground clearance. That ground clearance also yields softer corner with some lean and roll through the turns. The steering wheel is perfectly weighted for better control

and on-center feel, yet it adequately provides enough effort in turning. It has a tight turning radius, which makes getting out of tight situations easier. Brakes are very good with good power on normal and panic stops.


One question that was brought up on adding the larger engine to the Outlander Sport was about fuel economy. With the larger engine, the small Mitsubishi crossover got 25.2 MPG on average.

The main reason why many of us bought Outlander Sports was because of its overall value. The base price for an ES 2.0 model with front-wheel drive and a manual transmission is \$19,545. This GT 2.4 with AWC came fully loaded with a sticker price of \$30,495. You can get the larger 2.4-liter engine in the ES trim starting at \$21,295.

The Mitsubishi Outlander Sport has been around for quite some time. It is holding up very well, even with five new competitors giving chase to it. It is also getting better; the larger engine is proof of this. Any advantage the Outlander Sport can get in a growing segment will help. After all, it is definitely one of our favorite cars these days, a well-deserved position for a brand that continues to grow. ■



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"Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildered" by Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart

Sometimes, when I'm happy, I like to open a bottle of wine, listen to heart-wrenching music, and weep. Melancholy only deepens my joyfulness. I have no explanation for this, other than I might be crazy.

Anyway, last night, I was sitting on my back porch, listening to the great jazz singers of the 1940s, working my way through a bottle of cabernet, and crying like a drunken baby. I was as happy as a clam.

But, suddenly, I had a startling revelation. "This is very odd behavior," I said out loud to my dogs, who were sprawled about in various states of sloppy repose, not at all shocked by the trickle of wine slowly winding down my chin. They've seen worse.

"We've got to straighten up our act," I lectured the dogs. "She can't see us like this."

But then I ignored myself, took another drink of wine, and stared into mid-distance for what seemed like two hours. This staring into mid-dis-

tance has been happening a lot lately. It generally happens directly after I say her name, conjure her image, capture a whiff of her phantom scent.

In case you geniuses haven't figured it out yet, I'm in love.

This is only a 600-word column, so I'm not going to go into specifics on how this all came about. Just know that she's super awesome, completely out of my league, and you should all be very jealous of my good fortune.

Instead, I'd like to tell you about what it's like to fall in love at age 50. In a nutshell, it's a wonderful mess. It's very similar to falling in love at 20, but there are a few key differences. For starters, instead of worrying that your love interest will abandon you for another lover, you now fret that they might die.

I don't consider 50 to be old, and I have medical evidence to back this up! At my annual checkup, my doctor told me that the medical community considers 50 to still be "youngish." (Never mind that she laughed when she said it.) Yet, all evidence points to the fact that I'll live only another 30 years or so. Before this love thing happened, I felt this was a reasonable enough time to eat and drink everything I

desire and see my share of Broadway musicals. But now, suddenly, it seems very short indeed.

She puts butter in her coffee for some nutritional benefit that makes absolutely no sense to me, and I'm worried sick that she is clogging up her heart. I want to yank the butter coffee from her, grab her by the shoulders and scream, "Don't die!" But the relationship is still awfully new and I fear this behavior might scare her off or, frankly, give her a heart attack.

Another important difference to falling in love when you are "youngish" is that it's almost impossible to pretend you're someone that you're not. When you're a kid, it's easy to temporarily morph into the person you think would most intrigue — and least disgust — your love. But at age 50, you realized just how much work that is and that you can never sustain the pretense, so it's not worth the effort.

So, as I sat on the porch, considering how to become a different person for her, I realized that my strangeness is fully baked into me and can't be extracted. I'm just a weirdo who emotionally manipulates herself with wine and music, and she's slowly committing suicide via butter coffee. Yet, I'm completely bewitched. ■

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POR RODRO



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DÉGÉNÉRE!



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GRRRR!



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C'mon!
Pouah!
Allez!



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Sundays After Church

Uncle Bobby, Uncle Johnny, and my father are sitting in my grandparents' living room watching NASCAR. I don't understand the appeal of boringly designed cars — however colorful, however fast — looping around a track for hours on end. I *am* six years old, however, and the macabre piques my boyish interests. I watch for the accidents.

My grandmother is in her kitchen, where she stands over her stove with one hand on her hip and the other on the handle of a skillet. Fried chicken sizzles inside. She studies it and the contents of neighboring pots: salt-covered green beans and black-eyed peas (fresh shucked, by yours truly), collard greens mixed with pieces of bacon, and homemade gravy and mashed potatoes soaked in butter. She cracks open the oven occasionally to check on the cornbread.

The kitchen is dangerous territory this time on Sundays. You're welcome to the Frigidaire for sweet tea, but you'll do well to stay out of Mama's way. My mother knows this, but she knows no bounds. She hovers over my grandmother, asking pointless questions and sharing flimsy gossip.

"Get the hell out of my kitchen, Susie," my grandmother demands as she shoos my mother away with a dish rag. My mother laughs and shuffles into the living room.

On the front porch two of my aunts, Uncle Bobby's girlfriend-of-ten-years, and my grandfa-

ther sit on rocking chairs. My grandfather reads the Sunday funnies with a pipe hanging out of his mouth and fresh tobacco at his side. He drops the front of the paper to tell me a rhyme every time I stop by. I wonder how he knows so many.

My aunts watch my cousins and neighbor kids playing in the front yard with plastic swords and capes fashioned from pillowcases. I'm busy chasing my teenage brother's girlfriend around his Mustang, my brother's first-ever car and the pride of his life. He watches nervously from the top of the driveway with my older cousins, who talk about things I'm told I'm too young to hear. They move away when Aunt Barbara's green Mercedes pulls in. She and Uncle Dennis (the most glamorous members of the family) are visiting from Fort Lauderdale. I dart toward the car.

"Justarino!" Dennis calls as he exits the car. He's called me this since I can remember; the nickname sounds right coming only from him.

"Hey my little darlin'," my aunt says as I throw my arms around her sundress. She smells like I imagine movie stars smell: flowery and rich.

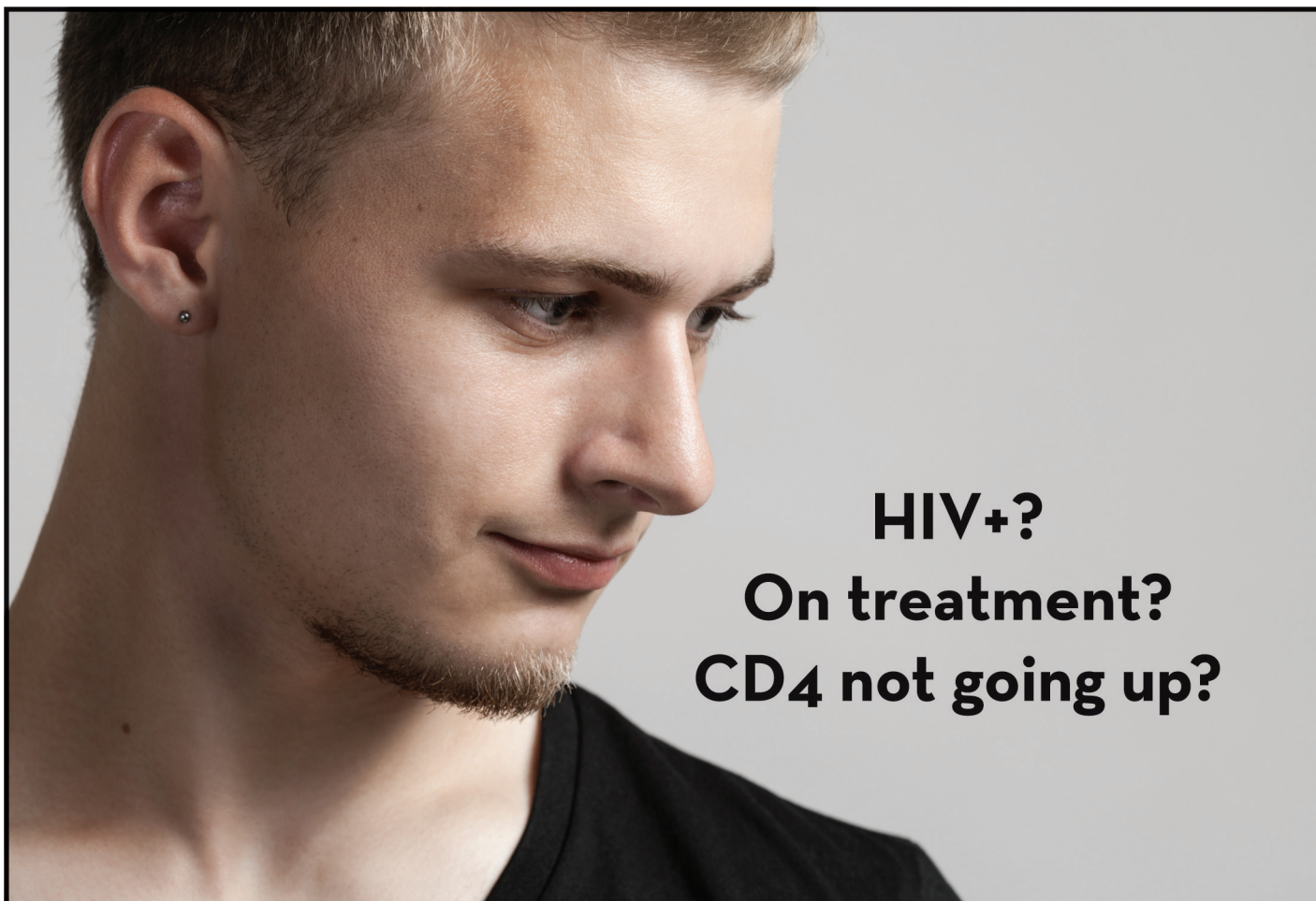
"Did you bring me a souvenir?" I call all gifts received from Aunt Barbara "souvenirs" regardless of their origin.

"Maybe," she says. "Let me on to say hello to everyone." I watch her walk toward the house, her dress dancing in the wind, and feel Dennis' hand rub my head as he passes me by.

Today is no special occasion. My aunt visiting is incidental. The goings on — *especially* the coming clamor over lemon meringue pie and chocolate yellow cake — are Sunday routine at my grandparents' house. These are traditions in motion, simplicities that make us whole, southern charms and delicious stereotypes. We remind ourselves on Sundays that we don't have much, but we've got enough; we've got each other.

Advance our portrait of Sundays at my grandparents' house ten years and NASCAR fades to black, the fried chicken stops sizzling, my mother stops her mischief, the rocking chairs stop rocking, my grandfather's rhymes grow silent, and we begin to disappear. From the porch swing and the rocking chairs, from the living room and the kitchen, from the driveway and the yard, members of my family vanish one after another. We are lost to death — so much death — to confinement, to rebellion, to abandonment. Hearses arrive and depart, people age and disappear, we become strangers and enemies, the yard grows unkempt and a For Sale sign sprouts at its edge. An endless night kidnaps my family.

I grew up watching the love around me collapse. I experienced enough warmth and comfort as a child to know how wonderful life could be, and enough tragedy to underline the highs. For this I can only be thankful, because I know what the world can be, and I strive every day to rebuild and make it so. ■



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